PROLOGUE

1630 e 15
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AND

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE

THEATRE

IN

DRURY-LANE 1747.

LONDON:

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PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY

Mr *GARRICK.*

WHEN Learning's Triumph o'er her barb'rous Foes
Firſt rear'd the Stage, immortal SHAKESPEAR roſe;
Each Change of many-colour'd Life he drew,
Exhauſted Worlds, and then imagin'd new:

Exi-

Exiſtence ſaw him ſpurn her bounded Reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain :
His pow'rful Strokes preſiding Truth impreſs'd,
And unreſiſted Paſſion ſtorm'd the Breaſt.

Then JOHNSON came, inſtructed from the School,
To pleaſe in Method, and invent by Rule ;
His ſtudious Patience, and laborious Art,
By regular Approach eſſay'd the Heart ;
Cold Approbation gave the ling'ring Bays,
For thoſe who durſt not cenſure, ſcarce cou'd praiſe.
A Mortal born he met the general Doom,
But left, like *Egypt*'s Kings, a laſting Tomb.

The Wits of *Charles* found eaſier Ways to Fame,
Nor wiſh'd for JOHNSON's Art, or SHAKESPEAR's Flame,

Them-

Themſelves they ſtudied, as they felt, they writ,
Intrigue was Plot, Obſcenity was Wit.
Vice always found a ſympathetick Friend ;
They pleas'd their Age, and did not aim to mend.
Yet Bards like theſe aſpir'd to laſting Praiſe,
And proudly hop'd to pimp in future Days.
Their Cauſe was gen'ral, their Supports were ſtrong,
Their Slaves were willing, and their Reign was long;
Till Shame regain'd the Poſt that Senſe betray'd,
And Virtue call'd Oblivion to her Aid.

Then cruſh'd by Rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
For Years the Pow'r of Tragedy declin'd ;
From Bard, to Bard, the frigid Caution crept,
Till Declamation roar'd, while Paſſion ſlept.
Yet ſtill did Virtue deign the Stage to tread,
Philoſophy remain'd, though Nature fled.

But forc'd at length her antient Reign to quit,
She ſaw great *Fauſtus* lay the Ghoſt of Wit:
Exulting Folly hail'd the joyful Day,
And Pantomime, and Song, confirm'd her Sway.

But who the coming Changes can preſage,
And mark the future Periods of the Stage?---
Perhaps if Skill could diſtant Times explore,
New *Behns*, new *Durfeys*, yet remain in Store.
Perhaps, where *Lear* has rav'd, and *Hamlet* dy'd,
On flying Cars new Sorcerers may ride.
Perhaps, for who can gueſs th' Effects of Chance?
Here *Hunt* may box, or *Mahomet* may dance.

Hard is his Lot, that here by Fortune plac'd,
Muſt watch the wild Viciſſitudes of Taſte;

With

With ev'ry Meteor of Caprice muſt play,
And chaſe the new-blown Bubbles of the Day.
Ah! let not Cenſure term our Fate our Choice,
The Stage but echoes back the publick Voice.
The Drama's Laws the Drama's Patrons give,
For we that live to pleaſe, muſt pleaſe to live.

Then prompt no more the Follies you decry,
As Tyrants doom their Tools of Guilt to die;
'Tis yours this Night to bid the Reign commence
Of reſcu'd Nature, and reviving Senſe;
To chaſe the Charms of Sound, the Pomp of Show,
For uſeful Mirth, and ſalutary Woe;
Bid ſcenic Virtue form the riſing Age,
And Truth diffuſe her Radiance from the Stage.

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY

Mrs *WOFFINGTON.*

SWEET Doings truly! we are finely fobb'd!
And at one Stroke of all our Pleaſures
robb'd!
No Beaux behind the Scenes!--'tis Innovation
Under the ſpecious Name of Reformation!

Public Complaint, forſooth, is made the Puff,
Senſe, Order, Decency, and ſuch like Stuff.
But Arguments like theſe are mere Pretence,
The *Beaux*, 'tis known, ne'er give the leaſt Offence,
Are Men of chaſteſt Conduct, and amazing Senſe!
Each Actreſs now a lock'd up Nun muſt be,
And prieſtly Managers muſt keep the Key.
I know their ſelfiſh Reaſons; tho' they tell us,
While Smarts, and Wits, and other pretty Fellows,
Murmur their Paſſions to our flutt'ring Hearts,
The Stage ſtands ſtill, and we neglect our Parts.
But how miſtaken in this ſilly Notion!
We hear 'em talk without the leaſt Emotion.
Juſt, as our Tea, we ſip each tender Strain,
Too weak to warm the Heart, or reach the Brain.
If harmleſs, why are we debarr'd our Rights?
Damſels diſtreſs'd have ever found their Knights.

Shall

Shall we, the *Dulcineas* of the Stage,
In vain aſk Succour in this fighting Age?
Will you choice Spirits, who direct the Town,
Suffer ſuch Impoſitions to go down?
Can it be thought this Law will ever paſs,
While Doors are only Wood, and Windows Glaſs?
Beſides, our Play-Houſe Guards are paſſive Men:
Strike without fear; they muſt not ſtrike again.
Ev'n *Fribble* here, to draw his Sword may venture,
May *cuſe the Creters*, beat his Man, and enter---
The jealous *Moor* not roars in louder Strains,
Than all our Nymphs for loſs of abſent Swains---
" We had been happy, though the Houſe had fail'd,
" Maſters and all, had not this Scheme prevail'd.
" For ever now farewell the plumed Beaux,
" Who make Ambition---to conſiſt in Cloaths.

" Farewel Coquettry, and all Green-room Joys,
" Ear-thrilling Whiſpers, *Deard*'s deluding Toys,
" Soul-melting Flatt'ry, which ev'n Prudes can move,
" Sighs---Tears---and all the Circumſtance of Love,
" Farewell !-----
" But Oh ! ye dreadful Criticks, whoſe rude Throats
" Can make both Play'rs and Maſterschange their Notes,
" 'Tis in your Pow'r---you any Lengths will run,
" Help us ; or elſe--our *Occupation*'s gone.

F I N I S.